'Informal' Meeting' Is Arranged,

Prosecution Shelved

Writer, Mob Probers

—AP WIREPHOTO.

SEN. ADRIAN G. DUPLANTIER, left, chairman of the Legislative Mafia Investigating Committee, talks with newsmen as Life writer DAVID L. CHANDLER listens. Chandler was in federal court here to avoid testifying before the committee in connection with his story on organized crime in Louisiana.

Life magazine writer David L. Chandler today agreed to an "informal meeting" with a legislative committee investigating organized crime in Louisiana, agreeing to a 10-day truce with the probers who had sought to force him to testify.

Chandler's attorneys and those of the legislative panel hammered out the truce in a closed-door conference with Federal District Judge Lansing L. Mitchell.

Under terms of the truce, Chandler will not be placed under oath and cannot be prosecuted for perjury or contempt. If after the truce expires the committee reinstates its subpoenas, Chandler still could face court action should he not obey them.

THE COMMITTEE is looking into allegations in an article by Chandler which charged widespread Mafia influences in state government.

Chandler's meeting with the committee will be closed to the press and will be held Thursday or Friday in Baton Rouge.

The committee agreed to withdraw, at least temporarily, its two subpoenas against

Okay 10-Day Truce

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Chandler, one for his appearance and one for certain documents he allegedly possesses.

IN THE MEETING in Judge Mitchell's office were Cicero Sessions, attorney for Chandler and Time Inc., publishers of Life and committee attorney John Parker of Baton Rouge. Chandeler was called in at the meeting's later stages.

In an apparent reference to Gov. John J. McKeithen, who had threatened to jail Chandler, Judge Mitchell said:

"If we can get certain people in Louisiana to let Mr. Duplantier run his committee the way he wants to, we will be better off."

The judge indicated that if the truce fails and the matter returns to court, it may be handled by a three-judge federal panel.

BEFORE HE went into the meeting, Chandler said of the committee probe:

"My private suspicion is that they are more interested in getting at my state sources and punishing them than anything else."

Sen. Adrian G. Duplantier, chairman of the legislative committee, flew in from Baton Rouge by helicopter to

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attend today's session. It was originally scheduled as a formal hearing on a motion by Sessions for a temporary restraining order to block the subpoenas against Chandler but the truce made the matter moot for the time being.

IT ALSO, said Sessions, suspended action on appeals filed in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a related development, the legislative committee was scheduled to meet in private today with Edward J. Steimel, director of the Public Affairs Research Council in Baton Rouge to hear a rundown on "what's right about the Life magazine allegations."

STEIMEL WAS expected to give the legislative - citizens advisory committee a report on the study which PAR did for the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice.

The study declared there is organized crime in Louisiana and, unlike top police officials who testified at the first public hearing of the legislative committee, named Carlos Marcello of Jefferson Parish as a kingpin.

Steimel, it has been learned, advised some members of the committee that there are points in the Life story which were accurate and should be cited. The line of questioning at the first hearing generally tended to contest the Life allegations.

Duplantier also confirmed that Gov. McKeithen has been invited to testify Thursday morning, when the committee will resume its hearings. Several other state officials are expected to appear during the two days.

Duplantier said the committee has employed Gordon Kean of Baton Rouge, Emile Bruneau of Baton Rouge and Tom Malik of Laplace as counsel.

DUPLANTIER SAID the committee is still pondering whether to subpoena Marcello, the reputed Mafia boss in Louisiana, or to also ask New Orleans Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso and Sheriff Alwynn J. Cronvich of Jefferson Parish to reappear for questioning.

Duplantier told a news conference the controversy surrounding the committee is almost inevitable.

"I think public confidence will come as we go along. You can't have a committee like this without controversy," he said.

MEANWHILE, House Judiciary "C" Committee passed 8-7 and sent to the floor a resolution giving citizen members of the Mafia probe committee the right to question witnesses.

The resolution would specifically give citizen members of the committee the right to question witnesses as opposed to the current practice of passing notes to legislators on the panel.

Rep. J. Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette, House sponsor for the resolution, said in one instance during the first hearing a question passed by a citizen to a lawmaker was ignored.

DUPLANTIER, however, later told newsmen that he did not ignore the question by Jim Levy, editor of the Bunkie Record.

Duplantier said Levy wanted to ask Cronvich about a specific point in the Life article that the sheriff already informed Duplantier he knew nothing about.

"I thought it would be kind of fruitless to ask a question that I already knew what his answer would be," Duplantier said. "Perhaps I was wrong."

OPPOSITION to the resolution in committee centered on possible constitutional questions raised by greater citizen participation.